

Arroyo Burro Watershed Public Forum

City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division

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Prepared by:



Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc. | 800 Hearst Avenue | Berkeley, CA
94710

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INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, November 10, 2004 the City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division held a public forum to gain public input regarding the development of an Arroyo Burro Watershed Action Plan. The public forum was held at the La Colina Junior High School Auditorium, 4025 Foothill Road in Santa Barbara, California. There were approximately six city staff, three consultants, and approximately 51 members of the public present. The meeting was videotaped for later broadcast on community television.

The public forum was one in a series of public meetings the Santa Barbara Creeks Division conducted as part of a preliminary planning effort to create a compelling vision and action plan for healthy Santa Barbara Watersheds, specifically the Sycamore, Arroyo Burro and Mission Creek watersheds. A public forum was held for each watershed with the purpose of determining the community's watershed planning priorities.

Daniel Iacofano, of Moore Iacofano Goltsman, (MIG) Inc. facilitated the forum. Jill Zachary of the Creeks Division provided background information and maps of the watershed and described some of City's activities to improve water quality within Santa Barbara. Paul Curfman, also of MIG, presented a framework of eight (8) components for evaluating and improving watershed health. (That presentation is available at www.sbcreeks.com). The eight components were previously developed by the Technical Advisory Group as a framework for healthy watersheds, and include:

- 1. Clean Up and Trash Removal**
- 2. Improved Water Quality**
- 3. Erosion and Sediment Control**
- 4. Terrestrial Habitat Enhancement**
- 5. Aquatic Habitat Enhancement**
- 6. Water Management**
- 7. Public Natural/Recreation Areas**
- 8. Increased Public Awareness**

About this Report and the Watershed Action Planning Process

This report summarizes the community's expressed interests regarding the eight components of a healthy watershed, particularly in reference to the Arroyo Burro Watershed. This information, in conjunction with the scientific evaluations now underway, will be used to form the community's vision for improvements within the watershed. By Summer of 2005 the watershed evaluations will be completed and the City will begin a comprehensive visioning process where there will be more opportunities for community input. After the community vision becomes more focused in late 2005 the Watershed Action Plans will be developed through 2006. By early 2007 the Watershed Action Plans should be completed.

ARROYO BURRO WATERSHED- SUMMARY OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The eight components of watershed health became the organizational structure for the evening's discussions about the Arroyo Burro Watershed. Community members divided into three groups where they identified issues and challenges within the watershed as well as developed strategies to improve the health of the watershed. At the end of the evening the three groups got back together and summarized the key points of each group discussion. The comments below summarize all of the discussions as well as the written comments received on distributed comment cards.

Clean-up and Trash Removal

Issues and Challenges

- Access, clean-up, scheduling, tools, and facilities all need to be considered
- Ensuring pet owners clean-up horse and dog excrement to reduce bacteria
- Addressing illegal dumping on public streets
- Keeping debris out of creek (lots of green debris – clippings, grass, brush clog creek)
- Priority areas in need of cleaning:
 - Hidden Valley should be clean before the rainy season begins
 - Culvert under Calle de Los Amigos
 - Stevens Park
 - Veronica Springs
 - Ocean
 - Creeks
 - Parks near State Street and other major streets

Strategies

- Sweep streets more frequently
- Provide more garbage cans in more locations, and clean them out regularly
- Increase “Clean-Up Behind Yourself” signage in parks (Pack it in – Pack it out)
- Provide bags for picking up dog excrement
- Assist homeowners with the establishment of regular volunteer creek clean-up programs
- Restrict access to vacant lots to discourage dumping and littering
 - Consider fencing in vacant lots
- Impose fines for dumping
- Educate and inform public about creek clean-up needs and provide information about who to call regarding clean-up schedule, dumping, etc.
 - Provide information through multiple types of media (newspapers, TV, documentary films, children educational programs, posters in retail stores, and possible a television station sponsor)
- Improve overall signage
- Require municipal trash removal for all land parcels (trash accumulates where removal isn't provided)

- Sponsor monthly clean-up activities
 - Make events as fun and as exciting as possible
- Ask the community for assistance with keeping our watershed clean!
- Encourage landowners to care for his/her part of the creek
- Ensure fast food restaurants properly dispose of their garbage
- Limit dog access to sensitive planting/plant areas

Improved Water Quality

Issues and Challenges

- Damaged and cracked sewer systems
 - Sewage treatment does not treat all pollutants, particularly if they're leaking out before treatment
- Faulty and outdated septic tanks may be contributing bacteria to streams via the groundwater
- Polluted ground water is more difficult to resolve
- There are no filters to separate dirt and debris from street runoff
- Homeowners using pesticides on plants and lawns are not aware of the impacts downstream
- Homeless people do not have bathrooms to properly dispose of their waste
- Storm water runoff has been increased by impervious surfaces
- Cars leaking oil contribute to urban runoff pollution
- Addressing the complexity of non-point bacteria sources
- Finding the source of contamination

Strategies

- Increase native planting to guard against bank erosion
- Educate homeowners and students about pesticides and their impact on the watershed
 - Develop integrated pest management (IPM) plans for schools and homeowners
- Monitor purchase and use of pesticides
- Provide assistance to convert and upgrade old septic tanks
- Provide incentives for proper automobile maintenance and proper disposal of oil
 - Provide discounts and fix-it opportunities where possible
- Provide public restrooms
- Implement a multi-purpose strategy that addresses drainage systems benefits and service deficiencies

Erosion & Sediment Control

Issues and Challenges

- Homeowners are not responsive to City regulations
- Debris basins upstream limit supply of sediment to creek and beaches
- Lack of funding to address bank stabilization
- Stream banks (City property and Private property) are under County Flood Control District Jurisdiction
- Addressing jurisdictional complications between City and County

Strategies

- Stabilize banks
- Provide incentives as opposed to mandates
- Do not force homeowners to plant; instead provide incentives
- Encourage guidelines and recommendations as opposed to enforcing regulations
- Obtain community consensus on potential regulations before implementation
- Determine and increase utilization of plants that guard against erosion
- Streamline permit process for homeowners
- Provide materials for planting to homeowners
- Provide free assistance with removing arundo, ivy and other invasive plants
- Provide classes on planting and integrated pest management (IPM)
- Provide alternatives to using concrete channels with biotechnical solutions

Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitat Enhancement

Issues and Challenges

- Removal of fish barriers; fish cannot access spawning areas
- Protection of the steelhead spawning habitat (especially in the upper reaches)
- Reintroducing steelhead fish
- Flows are depleted due to urbanization
- Considering upland habitats as contributing to the health of the watershed too

Strategies

- Conduct a steelhead assessment
- Provide incentives to residents for taking measures to protect and enhance habitats
- Plant more native plants and maintain growth of existing native plants
- Clean water and reintroduce steelhead to the environment
- Subsidize costs for planting native plants
- Restore spawning habitats

Water Management

Issues and Challenges

- Grey water guidelines are needed to instruct homeowners!
- Addressing sewage spills
- Preserving water resources
- Lack porous surfaces and increased runoff
- Infiltration systems could be expanded
- Impervious surfaces restrict infiltration of water and speed up runoff
- Sizing and location of injection facilities needs to be considered
- Undersized box culverts cause:
 - Increased FEMA insurance rates
 - High rates with no protection
 - Flooding under 101, SPRR, Walnut Grove
- Ensuring 100-year storm flood provisions are adequate
- Addressing increases in water velocity
- Runoff is lost before it can be filtered, recharged, and/or detained for use

Strategies

- Seek to balance runoff with natural flows
- Implement treatment and injection of clean water into groundwater for storage
- Spend funding on fixing sewer pipes
- Use reclaimed water to flush creeks
- Install retention basins
- Provide information and incentives for building with porous surfaces as opposed to using impervious surfaces
- Install storm water drains
- Address storm water contribution

Public Natural/Recreation Areas

Issues and Challenges

- Finding regional parking solutions for:
 - Arroyo Burro beach, Douglas Family Preserve, Ellings Park, tennis courts and trails
- Providing security, surveillance, enforcement in natural and recreational areas
- Managing human impact on environments
- Ensuring that the public respects private property
- Financing maintenance costs
- Restoration efforts are not responsive to community needs
- Limited funding
- City may be targeting poor solutions regarding bike path
- Ensuring trails are safe and well-maintained
 - Trails are unstable because of gravelly soil

- Ensuring trails do not go through private property and encourage trespassing

Strategies

- Enlist private property owners to help maintain public land at interface
- Create a trail for pedestrians and cyclists connecting Hidden Valley to Beach
- Increase access
- Provide distinct interpretative signage
- Provide public restrooms
- Create regional parking plan including all recreational facilities

Increased Public Awareness

Issues and Challenges

- Engaging public in creek clean-up
- Creating a sense of ownership in neighborhoods and neighborhood associations

Strategies

- Work with neighborhood associations to determine ways to increase pride and ownership of creeks and watershed
- Provide education for tourists
 - Maritime museum volunteers
 - Trolley tours
 - Whale watching
- Create an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy for the City
- Coordinate efforts with Friends of Arroyo Burro

General and Overall Comments

- Address all watersheds!
- How will we measure our progress?
- Currently, Creek Development Standards (CDS) are not proposed in the watershed action plans, however, residents expressed concerns about possible references being made to the CDS established in the *Las Positas Road EIR*
- Integrate land use planning with watershed management
- Identify standards for creek-side development that balance resource needs with property owner rights
- Implement creek sponsorship programs like existing highway sponsorship programs
- Implement fencing as a last resort; they are unsightly and there other preventive measures that can be implemented first

Group 1

Clean Up and Trash Removal

- Access to clean-up
- Horse and dog waste
- Homeowners afraid of City (no actions/regulations)

Solutions

- Garbage cans
- Clean-up in Parks (signs about trash)
- Encourage homeowners to clean-up creek
- Provide bags for picking up dog waste
- Spotlight trash problem areas like cleaning up parks near State Street and other major streets

Public Natural/Recreation Areas

- Restoration efforts are not responsive to community needs
- Access (problems with safety and trash)
- Limited funds [and] targeting poor solutions (bike path)
- Public and private property interface (public property not well-maintained)

Solutions

- Enlist private property owners to help maintain public land at interface

Improved Water Quality

- Sewer systems
- Polluted ground water
- Dirty streets with no filters to treat [runoff]
- Pesticides (homeowners contribute)
- Homeless (dogs and human waste)
- Storm Water runoff
- Sewage treatment does not treat all pollutants

Solutions

- Help from the City with problems (planting and bank erosion)
- Educate students about pesticides (Develop IPM for schools)

Erosion and Sediment Control

- Debris basin – limits supply of sediment to creek

Solutions

- City provide plants to control erosion
- Streamline permit process for homeowner
- Free materials
- Free help with removing weeds (Arundo)
- Classes on planting / IPM

Water Management

- Need grey water guidelines

Solutions

- Spend funding on fixing sewer pipes
- Reclaimed water- flush creeks

Habitat

- Trespassing for habitat studies

Solutions

- Restore City property
- Subsidize water costs for planting
- Notify property owners when studying creek
- Use reclaimed Water to flush creeks in summer

GROUP 2

Fix it Now!

- Homeowners bank repair
- Easy opportunities to increase water quality
- IPM
 - Provide ongoing information on what we are doing
- Monthly activities
 - Clean-ups
 - Ask for assistance
- Needs to be exciting

Problems

- Invasive weeds (arundo, ivy, non-native) causing flooding and fire hazards
 - ↳ Remove
- Reintroducing steelhead fish
 - ↳ Clean water
- Public access in public areas (not on private property) – could increase bacteria
 - ↳ Provide more access only on public land for educational purposes
 - ↳ Need to have public restrooms
 - ↳ Educate public and provide facilities

Erosion

- City property
- Need funding
 - ↳ Stabilize banks
 - ↳ Provide incentives not mandates

Regulations

- Regulations on private property
 - ↳ Make these voluntary and get consensus

Water Quality

- Septic tanks
 - ↳ Provide assistance to convert
- Cars leaking oil
 - ↳ Provide incentives
- Pesticide runoff
 - ↳ Educate residents involved
 - ↳ Inventory purchases and use

Clean Up and Trash Removal

- Illegal dumping on public streets
 - ↳ Restrict access (put up fences)

- ↳ Impose fines for dumping
- ↳ Educate public and inform public about who to call (newspapers, TV, documentary films, children educational programs, posters in retail stores, and possible a television station sponsor)
- ↳ Improve signage

Water Management

- Preserve water resources
 - ↳ Install retention basins
 - ↳ Address porous surfaces (provide information and incentives)

GROUP 3

Multi Jurisdictional Input & Buy-in

Overall

- Address all watersheds
- CDS proposed for new development in *Las Positas Road EIR*

Land Use

- Integrate with watershed management

Trash Removal

- Require trash removal for all parcels
- This is a step in the right direction
- Want more street sweeping
 - Clean before rains in Hidden Valley
- Culvert under Calle de Amigos
- Ocean garbage
- Creeks and ocean clean-up

Recreation

- Regional parking solutions
 - Arroyo Burro beach
 - Dean Family Preserve
 - Ellings Park
 - Tennis Courts
 - Trails
- Trail to Palermo to Beach – planning with Hillside House
- Security, surveillance, enforcement
- Well planned, impact managed
- Respect private property
- Trails not necessarily on creeks
- Maintenance costs

Water Management

- Infiltration
- Treatment and injection
- Impervious surfaces
- Sizing and location of injection facilities treatment
- Balance with natural flows
- Undersize box culverts
 - FEMA insurance
 - High rates with no protection
 - Under 101, SPRR, Walnut Grove

- Flooding - 100 year storm
- More water velocity

Public Awareness

- Creek clean-up
- [Create a sense of] ownership in neighborhoods with association
- Tourist education
 - Maritime museum volunteers
 - Trolley tours
 - Whale watching
- Residential and general public education
- IPM policy for City
- Friends of Arroyo Burro

Habitat Enhancement

- Residential incentives
- Native seeds and cutting
- Removal of fish barriers
- Steelhead spawning habitat (Consider upper reaches)

Erosion Control

- Immediate re-vegetation
- Fences
- Incision of creek
- Jurisdictional complication with City and County
- Options to concrete channels/bio-tech solutions
- Add habitat to stabilization
- Steelhead test